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MEMORANDUM

Date: November 13, 2007
To: Parks and Recreation Department Commissioners
From: R.J. Cardin, Director 
Re: **Director's Summary of Current Events**

Listed below are issues that the department has been involved with since the October 9, 2007 Director's Summary.

Budget

On October 28th we received our first access to the FY07-08 budget maintenance module. We have begun to do forecasting for this fiscal year. The camping and entrance have been off to a slow start this year, possibly due to the warm weather. It is early yet to determine the impact of the fee changes that went into effect on August 13, 2007.

Superintendent Report

Spur Cross Ranch Conservation Area (SCRCA): 16 guided hikes were conducted in the month of October with varying success due to the continued heat. In addition, one private hike was conducted with 68 children in attendance.

Kevin Smith completed another Eagle Scout conservation project on October 6, the project involved installing steps to facilitate access to a petroglyph site.

Solar Oasis: We anticipate completing this project with the scouts on November 17. This project is a cooperative project between Parks, Game and Fish and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service to create a refugia pond in the mesquite bosque north of the old ranch site. The \$12,000 grant, with matching labor from the park, make the project a \$ 20,000-40,000 enhancement.

Channel 3 came out to do a production about the conservation area; staff spent over 6 hours with them, for a 3-4 min spot! It is intended to be aired as part of a "things to do" near Phoenix series in early November, around the 6-8th. We expect this series will greatly boost our day use.

The Park Supervisor continues to work with a local developer and the local Land Trust regarding developing a master plan for managing an important spring (Apache Spring) located along the regional trail between Spur Cross and Cave Creek parks.

Cave Creek Regional Park: Seven different programs were held this month, including Hiking 101 and Rocks & Mining, which were very successful.

Cave Creek Trail Rides have returned and is fully operational.

Cave Creek Park Supervisor position was opened for internal applicants, County employees were interviewed for the position with Amy Ford being selected and promoted from the Desert Outdoor Center. Her first day as Park Supervisor was Monday, October 22nd.

Approximately 15 volunteers participated with the Unmark the Park program at Cave Creek cleaning up both sides of 32nd Street, From Carefree Highway to the Park. Another 30 volunteers assisted with the clean up at Adobe Dam.

Usery Mountain Regional Park: The Interpretive Ranger presented 16 interpretive programs in October, and also attended the Zaraharis Elementary School Fall Carnival where she visited with close to 230 people. The "Just for Kids" program "Scampering Scorpions" had participants despite the warm temperatures for October and the Full Moon Hike was, as always, the most popular hike.

We completed the transfer of venomous animals from the Mountain Patrol Division of the Sheriff's Department to Usery Park; the new critters on board are a Gila monster, Mojave rattlesnake and a gopher snake.

Steve Spence from the maintenance team is spending one day a week at White Tank Park assisting the Trails Crew on the Waterfall Trail project.

McDowell Mountain Regional Park: The 5th Annual Javelina Jundred (100 mile) foot race was held and pre-registration was capped at 150 participants, the oldest was 68 years old.

The Eastside Superintendent and Park Supervisor met with Janeen Rohovit, SRP Public Involvement and Debbie Vaske, also with SRP, and walked the alignment of the new SRP 69KV power line with the community of Rio Verde. During that walk SRP listened to the requests of the department concerning what the park felt was needed at all locations where the work on the power line had disturbed the desert. The result was that approximately 27 trees and 13 Brittle Bushes were placed along the route and around areas cleared near the power poles. SRP agreed to re-hydro seed the disturbed areas, using the contractor selected by the Parks Department. This project is not completed, but this initial step is critical to the successful completion of the larger project and the agreement by both parties as to what was needed and will be provided by SRP is in itself a notable accomplishment. The area to be seeded will be scarified.

The Park has a grant from the United States Fish and Wildlife Service to add signage and vegetation to the Pemberton Pond area.

San Tan Mountain Regional Park: Another critter made its way to the San Tan entry station. A western diamondback rattlesnake was received from the Maricopa County Sheriffs Office and now calls San Tan home.

Programs and events at San Tan continue to be a hit with park visitors. The "Hiking with the Stars" Moonlight Hike in September attracted 81 visitors to explore the nightlife at San Tan. Ranger Doc from White Tank gave a fascinating presentation on venomous creatures and creepy crawlies to 46 eager park visitors.

Several Boy Scout groups offered assistance to help clean up the entrance areas along Phillips and Wagon Wheel Road.

The cultural resource survey has been completed for the San Tan parking lot extension. Progression on the parking lot area will begin soon.

Estrella Mountain Regional Park: 19 interpretive programs were conducted with over 950 park visitors participating. Construction is underway on the creation of the new park visitor center.

White Tank Mountain Regional Park: Outreach programs are going strong with 9 outreaches. 10 public programs were held in October, with a great turn out for the Park Sponsored Kids Halloween with 450 participants!

The tortoise habitat is 95% complete and the tortoise is acclimating.

35 volunteers participated in the Unmark the Parks clean-up.

Lake Pleasant Regional Park: Fishing with the Ranger was a success with 24 people showing up. The Great Scorpion Hunt did very well as usual, but with cooler weather, this program will be on hold until next spring. The next stargazing program will be on December 1st. Morning fitness hikes restarted on October 14th and will continue through the cooler weather.

Unmark the Parks was successful with approximately 200 volunteers at the lake and 100 at Table Mesa. National Public Lands Day cleanup brought 200 volunteers.

Carbon Monoxide Education Grant from AZGF to place signs at make-ready areas and on cove buoys was submitted to AZGF.

Scorpion Bay - Construction Coordination

Blasting began last month and continues for another 2-3 weeks, occurring every day for a week at 1 p.m.

Road will be closed for a day to install utilities.

As landform changes, Nav Aid will need to re-identify and mark hazards.

Identified area just beyond marina to place large boulders in clusters for 9-acre fish habitat.

Desert Outdoor Center: 320 people attended our special Meteor Showers Stargazing, making this one of the largest events put on by DOC staff. The Friends of the DOC afforded significant assistance.

Refurbishment of the Butterfly Garden with a grant to the Friends Group from Sonora Audubon Society was completed. New signs are being planned for the outdoor exhibit.

Contract Updates

Buckeye Hills - The RFP was released and the Pre-Proposal Conference was conducted for the public shooting complex. Proposals are due November 8th.

Coming and Going in Human Resources

The following people recently left Parks: Perry Marsi, Park Maintenance Worker at Cave Creek and John Kelly, temporary Contact Station Assistant at Lake Pleasant.

The following people have been hired at Parks: Jeff Plumley, new temporary Park Maintenance Worker at the DOC.

We are currently recruiting for the following positions, Interpretive Ranger at Utery Park and Park Maintenance Worker at Cave Creek Park.

Interviews for the Interpretive Ranger positions at McDowell and Cave Creek Parks were held September 25, 2007. James Terrell was promoted from Park Office Assistant at Cave Creek to Interpretive Ranger for Cave Creek effective October 8, 2007. A choice was made for the McDowell Park Interpretive Ranger but we are still waiting for paperwork to be finalized.

Interviews were held for the Cave Creek Park Supervisor position on October 11, 2007. Amy Ford was promoted from Interpretive Ranger at the DOC to Cave Creek Supervisor effective October 22, 2007.